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RR RUEHLH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHKP #0396 3621524  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 281524Z DEC 09  
FM AMCONSUL KARACHI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1460  
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0914  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 2781  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 4663  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0367  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1918  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0322  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIAA/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS KARACHI 000396

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O 12956: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV PTER PK

SUBJECT: SUICIDE BOMBING DURING MUHARRAM PROCESSION IN KARACHI -  
SITREP 1

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A suicide bomber attacked a Muharram procession in Karachi on December 28. Preliminary reports indicate 25 dead and 82 wounded. Following the initial explosion, marchers attacked security personnel and vehicles. Leaders from all political parties are calling for calm in the city. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) A suicide bomber detonated himself in the midst of a Muharram procession at 1615L on December 28. The bombing, on M.A. Jinnah Road, was approximately 3km northwest of the consulate office building. Casualty figures are still rising, but currently stand at 25 dead and 82 injured. Over 10,000 security personnel were assigned to the procession route and roads blocked. However, the attacker was still able to get into the procession. No one is hazarding a guess yet as to the identity or affiliation of the bomber, although most politicians view it as an extension of the recent attacks in other parts of the country. One "suspicious individual" was arrested at the scene. Following the explosion, marchers began attacking security personnel and vehicles. Several ambulances and police vehicles were damaged by the explosion and subsequent rioting. There are reports of sporadic acts of violence in the city, mainly shops being set on fire, but nothing widespread.

¶3. (SBU) In an effort to quell potential sectarian violence, leaders from both the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) took to the airwaves to urge calm. Syed Mustafa Kamal, mayor of Karachi, called for citizens to "not take law and order into their own hands" as this was not an attack on a particular group, but an "attack on all people of Karachi." Farooq Sattar, Minister for Overseas Pakistanis deemed the attack a "strike at the jugular vein of Pakistan."

¶4. (SBU) All Consulate Karachi personnel are accounted for (tdy and permanent). The area of the procession was restricted by RSO in a security notice issued last week, and no consulate personnel were in the area. Post will continue to monitor the situation overnight, but currently plans to maintain normal operations.

MADDEN